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THE  
WAY TO  
A BLESSED E-  
STATE IN  
THIS LIFE.

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BY  
EZEKEL CULVERVELL.

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THE  
OTYAW  
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THIS TIME

EXERCISES ON THE  
EXERCISES OF THE MIND



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**THE** way to  
**A BLESSED**  
**ESTATE IN**  
**THIS LIFE.**



**H**AT which our Lord Jesus from Heaven writ unto the Church of Sardis; Thou hast a name that livest, but art dead, may be truly spoken of the greater sort of not-counterfeit Professors of the Faith in our time; for it is cleare by the Text, that this is not spoken of hypocrites, who are stike dead, but

Rev. 3. 1.

Many drowsie professo-  
tors.

of such who having some life  
remaining in them, are in a dead  
sleepe : for these of whom I  
speake, take good paines to  
keepe vp a name of Christiani-  
tie, both in the exercises of Reli-  
gion, and in their outward be-  
haviour, ( though in both where  
be much fayling, ) but in very  
truth there is but a little life of  
faith and loue in all their Pro-  
fession, as may appeare in their  
cold and vncomfortable pray-  
ers, in their wandering and  
drowsie hearing of the Word,  
and vnfruitfull receiving of the  
Sacraments, and much more in  
their abuse and neglect of the  
secret exercises of Prayer, rea-  
ding, and meditation by them-  
selves, and conference with o-  
thers, seldom deeply beway-  
ling their estate, lessercioycing  
in the assurance of their salva-  
on by Christ, as seldom delight-  
ing in God, with a zeale to set  
forth his glorie in every part of  
their

their life.

Though this be the state of the greater part of those that haue some truth of grace in them, yet may we say again, that there are with vs, ( as in the Church of Sardis ) *a few names that haue not defiled their garments,* that is, doe liue vnirebukably, and walke worthy their holy calling, having a sweet feeling of Gods favour vnto them, and so can boldly come vnto him in time of need, with assurance that he doth graciously respect them, their prayers, and vnsigned obedience; who likewise doe more delight themselves in God, then in all earthly things, accounting it their greatest griefe to offend him, and greatest ioy to please him; possessing their soules with confidence and patience in their greatest tryalls, looking for the appearing of Christ.

This is that bleffed estate to be

A few worthy.

What a  
blessed life  
here may  
be attained.

Desire by  
many, not  
attained.

How this  
life is attai-  
ned.

enjoyed in this life, which God hath prepared, (though in divers measures) for the faithfull, all which may well be contained in this short sentence of the Psalmist. Psal. 37. 4. *Delight thy selfe in the Lord, and he will give thee thy hearts desire :* which I doubt not but all true Christians (when they haue well considered it) would be glad to attaine vnto : But either through ignorance of the way how to attaine it, or through negligence; not putting in practise what they know : they spend many yeares, either securely, or uncomfortably; seldom attaining to that heavenly feasting, which (if they were wise.) might be their daily refreshing : whose estate I much tendering, doe endeavour to shew them, how this happie life may be attained ; which I conceiue to be only by a more plentifull feeding vpon Christ by faith. It is without que-

question, that all and every part  
of our spirituall life is in Christ,  
of whose fulnesse we receiuē grace  
for grace is; and this is as cleare,  
that we receive no grace first or  
last from Christ, but by belie-  
ving: in which respect Christ is  
truely and principally said to be  
our spirituall food, and belie-  
ving to be the true feeding vpon  
him. Which being so, it ne-  
cessarily followes, that feeding  
seldome, or weakly; we cannot  
haue much spirituall strength:  
and otherwise feeding plenti-  
fully and soundly, wee shall be  
fat, and flourishing in grace, and  
so attaine vnto the blesed life  
spoken of.

For the better vnderstanding  
and practising whereof, this is  
specially to be considered, How  
every true believer may daily,  
yea, oft in the day, by faith feed  
upon Christ, that so he may re-  
ceiuē from him all spirituall  
nourishment, for his refreshing

Ioh. i. 16.

Ioh. 6. 27.

35.

34.

How to  
feed oft in  
the day on  
Christ.

and strengthening to every good worke.

This is done by setting before vs those sweet promises, which God hath made to vs, for the strengthening of our faith in all our necessities : and, so particularly to apply them to our selues. Whereby we may comfortably assure our selues, that we shall enjoy that which God hath promised. Wherein we are first to get the true meaning of that which is promised.

Secondly, To see we haue a good warrant, that this is promised to vs, that thereupon we may conclude, we shall certainly enjoy that which God hath promised, seeing he is faithfull who hath promised.

Example.

But seeing this is not well conceived by many, I will make it plaine by example. i. Cor. 1. 30. it is said; *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto vs wisdome, and righteousness,*

nesse, and sanctification, and redemption. In which is as much said as may be conceived, or desired; the meaning whereof is, that every true beleever, is by Gods spirit made a liuing member of Christ Jesus, from and in whom, he is made by God a true partaker of all things needfull to salvation: that whereas he is by nature foolish, guiltie, filthy, and in bondage, now in Christ he is made perfectly wise, righteous, holy, freed from all his enemies, and so restored to full happiness. This promise of God being clearely vnderstood, must now be applyed particularly by every beleever to himselfe, thus: Seeing God who is all-sufficient, and faithfull, hath in his Word, which is Truth it selfe, promised these great benefits (in which all are contained) to every true beleever, therefore I who doe truly, though weakely, beleue in Christ,

Christ, may boldly assure my selfe, that all these be mine, and therefore I shall not want any thing needfull for my present comfort, or eternall happinesse. Which whosoever doth daily practise in this manner to maintaine, and increase his faith by application of this, and all other of Gods promises, he shall daily more and more enioy in this life that blessed estate we speake of.

Pray for  
faith.

Not easie.

But for as much as faith is the gift of God, and we cannot further beleue then wee be drawne by Gods spirit, therefore we must ioyne often, and fervent prayer; that God by this meanes would increase our faith.

This may seeme easie to be performed, but vpon better tryall it will not be found so easie to doe it effectually, for besides our owne great vntowardnesse to beleue, I cannot thinke of

of any dutie, wherein our common Adversary, will vs more cunning, and diligence to hinder vs, then in this: either by keeping vs from the worke, or beguiling vs in it: whereby it comes to passe, that very few doe (to any good purpose) practise the same.

Amongst many lettes which hinder the faithfull practise hereof, I obserue these two, in two divers sorts of believiers. The former in those, who not sufficiently feeling their wants, and too much consented with their estate, doe not so prize Christ, and this blessed estate in him, as may moue hem to take his paines, and therefore never reach vnto this growth in grace, whereunto they might come; if the fault were not in them selues. The other let, is in those who highly prizing the benefit, and earnestly labouring for it, are by the sense of their owne

Two chief  
lettes.

1. Not pri-  
zing Christ

2. Our un-  
worthines.

Remoue of  
the first let.

vnworthiness, so kept downe,  
that they cannot with any hope  
ooke vp, for so great a bles-  
sing.

For the remouing of both  
these lettes, the first sort are to  
bethinke themselues, what an  
uncomfortable account it will  
be, when God shall call them to  
it, to see how many yeares they  
haue spent, with little growth  
in grace, either to the glorie of  
God, or good example to o-  
thers, or to the peace of their  
owne soules. Whereas on the  
other side, they might haue at-  
tained vnto such a sweet life, as  
would haue beene a heaven vpon  
earth; namely, *To reioyce al-  
ways in the Lord.*

Of the se-  
cond let.

For the other poore soules,  
who are kept downe with the  
sense of their owne vnworthi-  
ness, they are to know, that all  
God's promises, are free and un-  
deserved, so as no vnworthiness  
ought to hinder them from be-  
lieving:

leaving: yea; rather they that have the most sense of their owne vnrorthynesse, haue most incomraigement to beleue, for that voyce of Christ, Come unto me all you that are weary and heare laden, and I will ease you, serueth not onely for our first conversion, but in all our distractiōes whatsoever, throughout the whole course of our life.

If any escape both theflets, and goe about this worke, then wil Satan vsall his skill to beguile both sorts: such as are weake and hearie hearted, sone discouraged, he tempts and perswades, they labour in vaine, and doe not beleue, when indeed they doe, as shall appeare. The other sort who are too well concited, and light hearted, Satan labours to perswade, that they shauē more faith then indeed they haue, and that their case is better then in truth it is.

Mat. 11. 28.

Some  
that  
Satan will  
beguile;

Some, that  
they be-  
lieue not;

Others, that  
they haue  
more faith  
then they  
haue.

It shall be therefore the wise  
dome of all who will not be de-  
ceived, carefully to examine &  
try themselves; which that they  
may the better do, let them  
consider of these markes that  
follow, whereby either for  
may certainly judge of them  
selues. *He in me and I in him*

**Foure  
markes of  
faith not  
seen.**

*et aliud  
miseratio  
nemus  
et alia  
et alia*

1. Griefe  
for want of  
faith.
2. Constant  
labour for  
it.
3. True  
loue to  
God.

*For such as considerably  
devout to nourish their faith in  
such manner as hath bee  
shewed, and yet finde no com-  
fort, but feare they doe not be  
loues, (when as indeed they  
doe). these are to discerite their  
faith by such secret operations,  
as doe certaintly shew faith to  
be there, though it be not seen:  
namely, **An unfeigned griefe  
for the want of faith, with an  
unceasant indeavour for the at-  
taining of it.** Againe, **A rever-  
entie to eme of God, and heartie  
affection of unfeigned loue to  
him, which cannot be without  
some former apprehension of  
Gods***

Gods loue to them, which is in many, (though they see it not). And lastly, A tender Conscience, fearing to displease God, even in smaller matters, which others little regard. Whosoever shall finde these fruits, (which cannot come but from faith) may certainly know, that there is a roote of faith grounded in their hearts, though they see it not. But such as haue no feeling of their faith, and see no such effects in their liues, haue just cause to thinke that they haue no faith at all.

4 A tender  
conscience.

No fruits,  
no faith.

As for the other sort, who are too well perswaded of themselves, that they finde comfort in meditating on Gods promises, whereas indeed they deceiue themselves, and haue not that faith they imagine, as their fruits doe shew.

To 2227.2  
models  
Notes of  
true and  
false com-  
fort.

This may be discerned by these notes;

First, True comfort is visual-  
ly

22009  
22101. ad  
True, is  
hardly got.

ly very hardly gotten, with much prayer and labour, and it is oft a long time before this be felte: therefore they who vpon their first thoughts on these promises, finde comfort that they haue part in them, may so farre mistrust, all is not sound, till they shall see some better proofe therof: which if they doe not, but for all this will be confident, that all is well, it is to be feared, their comfort is not sound.

2. Fear of  
deceit,

For this is another propertie of that true comfort which springs from faith, especially in young and weake believers, that they (so highly valuing the benefit,) are very fearefull of being deceived, and must see good evidence before they will be perswaded, that they haue this saving faith.

3. Poore  
in spirit,  
mourne, and  
lowly.

Whereof if they shall be perswaded, yet therewithal is ioyned such a feeling of the weakenesse of

of their faith, and so of all grace, as makes them poore in their owne eyes, & mourne for their wants, thinking lowly of themselves, and more highly reverencing the graces of God in others. Whereas they who be deceived, are as the Laodiceans, rich and wanting nothing, and so be merry, and too light hearted, thinking too well of themselves, and too slenderly of others, better then themselves.

Another faire marke of sensible faith and comfort, is this, That they that haue tasted of it, can never be satisfied, but still hunger and labour for more: none more diligently vsed all good meates to grow in grace then they. Even as the strong and most healthfull bodie, doth feed better then the weake and sickly. But such as being well satisfied with that they haue, & feele no hunger, nor labour for more, it is evident their faith

4. Hunger  
and labour  
for more.

5. Answerable  
obedience.

and comfort are not good.  
To proceed, and not to gather  
all that might be added hereto,  
thus shall I run for all. That as  
like fire, like heat; so like faith,  
like life, great or small; So that  
where there is strong faith, there  
must needs be great obedience,  
and therefore whosoever has but  
that is careless, shibis, contumelious,  
tiring, and barren in christians, of  
a holy life, his faith must needs  
be weake, if not dead.

Wherof for to conclude, I ad-  
vise every man vther by these  
markes shall discerne himselfe  
to be deceived, with fancie in  
stead of faith; to goe about this  
worke more seriously, and to lay  
a better foundation of faith, and  
not to say, he hath found com-  
fort, till he can bring good wit-  
nesse thereof. Which whosoever  
shall neglect, shall in the end  
(to say no more) lameachis fol-  
ly, when he who seeing his er-  
rour, shall more carefully, and  
con-

constantly put in practise this  
maine dutie of daily feeding vp  
on Christ ; shall grow in grace,  
and attaine to that blessed life  
here, whereof we speake,  
besides eternall life,  
the full reward  
of all his  
labours.  
(.)

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F I N I S.

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